DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

450 McAllister St. - 5th Floor
(415)558-5260

NOTICE THAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT IS DETERMINED TO BE REQUIRED

this Notice: June 10, 1983

gency: City and County of San Francisco, Department of City Planning
450 McAllister St. - 5th Floor, San Francisco CA 94102

Contact Person: Jim McCormick **Tel:** (415) 558-526

t Title: 82.392EZTM: Van Ness Avenue Plan **Project Sponsor:** Dept. of City Planning

Project Contact Person: Jim McCormick

t Address: Van Ness Avenue from Market Street north to the bay

or's Block(s) and Lot(s): N/A

nd County: San Francisco

t Description: Establishment of the Van Ness Mixed Use District requiring nd map amendments to the City Planning Code, and a Master Plan amendment ng the Van Ness Avenue Plan as an element of the San Francisco Comprehensive

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SEE ATTACHED

ne for Filing of an Appeal of this Determination to the City Planning Commis- June 20, 1983.

eal requires 1) a letter specifying the grounds for the appeal, and 2) a filing fee.

Alec S. Bash, Environmental Review Officer

ER5 6/80

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26i

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Van Ness Avenue Plan Initial Study, 82.392E

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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

VAN NESS AVENUE PLAN:
Conservation and Development

Background

In April 1981, the Mayor introduced "A Six-Point Program for Expanding Housing in San Francisco." In her housing program, the Mayor recommended rezoning certain areas near the downtown to residential use to encourage housing development. One of these areas is Van Ness Avenue. In her program, the Mayor envisioned "the future development of the Van Ness/South Van Ness Corridor as a major residential boulevard with mixed-use development stepped back to preserve light and air."

The Van Ness Avenue Plan incorporates a set of land use and urban design policies and controls which are intended to encourage and facilitate new mixed-use and predominantly residential development within the Plan's 63-block area. The plan would need to be adopted by the City Planning Commission as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan through a Master Plan amendment procedure. The Commission would also establish a Van Ness Avenue Mixed-Use District incorporating text and map amendments to the City Planning Code which must be adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

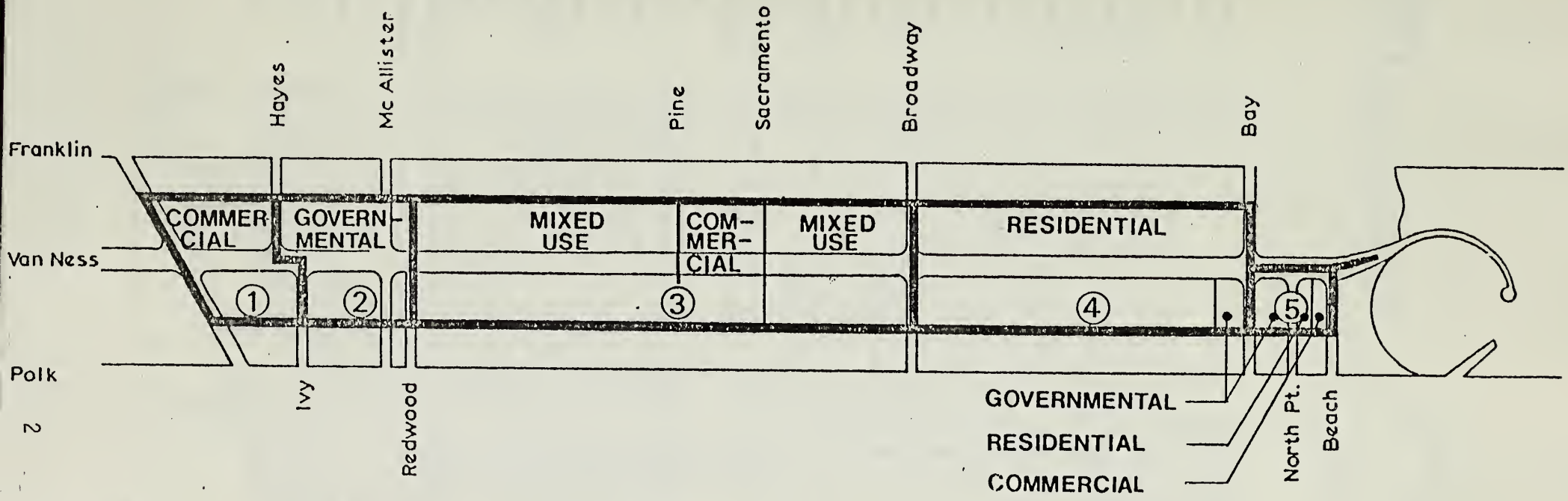
The Van Ness Avenue area encompasses 63 blocks extending the entire length of Van Ness Avenue from Market Street north to the bay and generally affecting parcels fronting on both sides of Van Ness to the east and the west (please see Figures 1 and 2).

Van Ness maintains a mixed residential and commercial character. Although residential and commercial uses are seen throughout the length of the street, the largest concentration of housing rests in the northern portion of the street and the highest concentration of commercial uses lies in the southern portion (see Figure 1). To better guide new development within the area, five discrete subareas have been identified, some of which are appropriate for major new development while others are more appropriate for conservation with some infill development and conversion of their present use. These five subareas are briefly described below.

Subarea 1: Highrise Office Node (Market to Hayes and Ivy Streets)

Zoned C-3-G (Downtown General Commercial) with a height limit of 320 and 130 feet, this 5-1/2 block area includes two highrise and one midrise office buildings, a number of smaller retail and office buildings and a substantial amount of parking. This subarea features two architecturally significant buildings and a small number of apartments (64 dwelling units). The area is presently underused with respect to its allowable building area. The subarea maintains a juxtaposition between the highrise downtown office district, the Market Street midrise office/retail district and the low-rise residential/commercial neighborhoods to the south and west, and is well-served by major transit and transportation systems.

SUBAREAS ① Through ⑤



Existing Predominant Land Uses

FIGURE 1

EXISTING
HEIGHT & BULK DISTRICTS

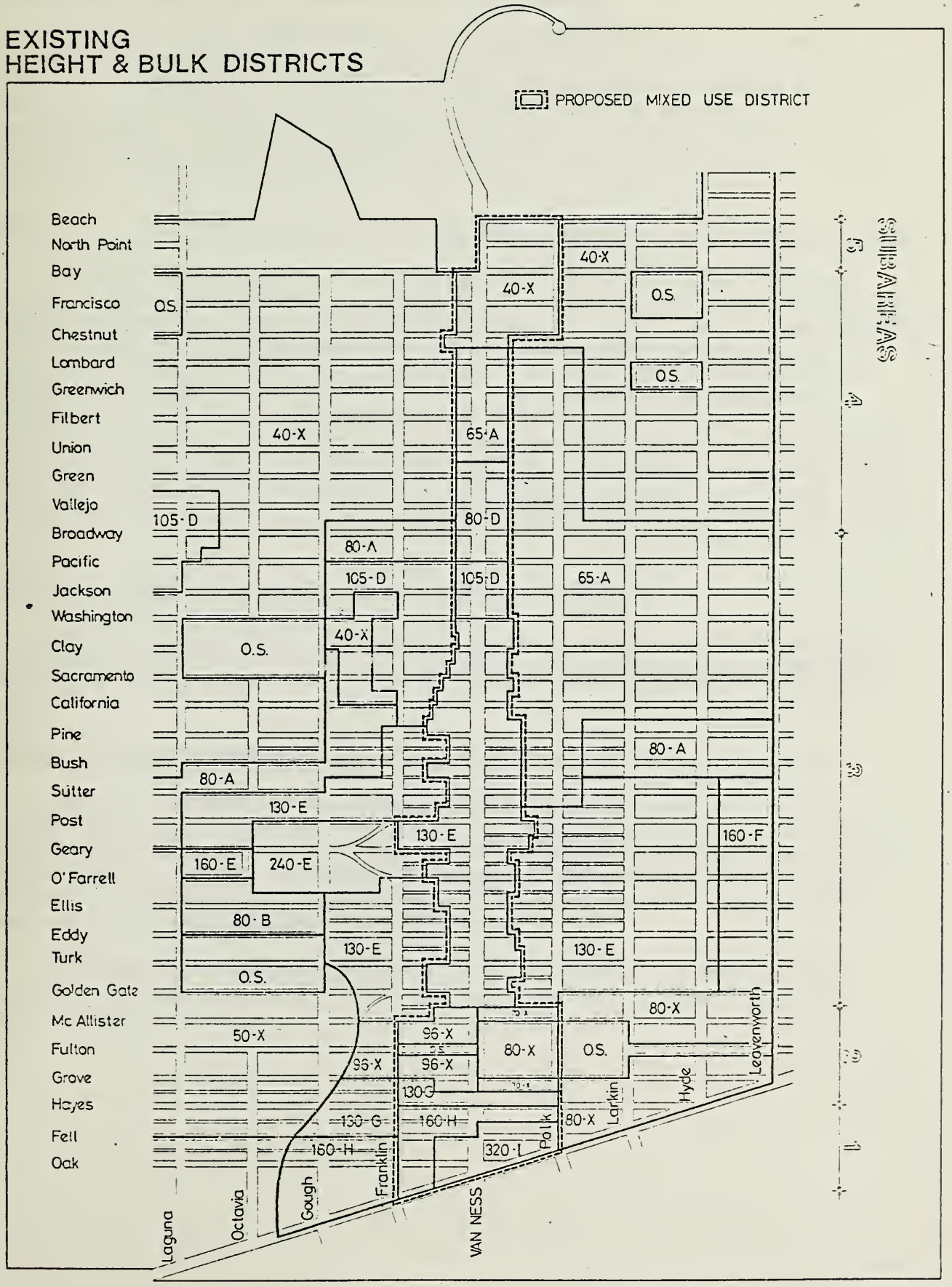


FIGURE 2

Subarea 2: Civic Center (Hayes to Redwood Streets)

The Civic Center area is an important governmental, cultural and ceremonial focal point for the city and its visitors. This approximately six block area encompasses City Hall, the Opera House, Davies Symphony Hall, and the War Memorial/Museum of Modern Art buildings, all of which are architecturally outstanding low-rise structures. Government business and public cultural activities are the predominant uses within Subarea 2. One apartment building with 40 living units lies within the subarea.

Subarea 3: High Density Mixed Use Development (Redwood to Sacramento Streets)

Van Ness Avenue becomes U.S. Highway 101 from Golden Gate Avenue to Lombard Street. As a major thoroughfare this 33-block portion of Van Ness has become a commercial district featuring an auto row, major hotels, restaurants, and a variety of other businesses serving city residents and visitors. The subarea is zoned a C-2 (Community Business) Use District and most of the subarea is designated a 130-E Height and Bulk District. The subarea's designated height limit declines from 130 feet to 80 feet along Van Ness as it approaches the Bay. Few buildings have been developed to this limit; most of the buildings being 2, 3 or 4 stories in height. The California Street cable car line terminates at Van Ness and California, where one is afforded a view of the East Bay foothills and the skyline framed by the upper and lower slopes of Nob Hill.

Subarea 4: Housing Conservation (Broadway to Bay Street)

Zoned C-2 and RM-1 (Mixed Residential, Low Density), with height limits diminishing from 80 to 40 feet, the primary use is medium-density apartment housing, although a number of older houses have been converted to commercial use.

Subarea 5: Visual Node and Open Space (Bay Street to the Bay Shoreline)

Subarea 5 is a short, two-block stretch from Bay Street to the San Francisco Bay shoreline. It is, however, an important recreation and open space resource for the city and its visitors and offers a spectacular view of the Bay and its islands and the hills beyond. The visitor to this area is afforded a panoramic view, moving from an urban cityscape to the more soft forms of the Bay waters and the Marin headlands.

The proposed land use and urban design policies and regulations are briefly described below and will be described in detail in the subsequent environmental document.

Van Ness Avenue plan
initial study.
1983.

Proposed Policies

- o Encourage High Density Mixed Use Developments.
- o Maximize Residential Development within the Van Ness Avenue Area.
- o Preserve identified architecturally significant buildings. Encourage adaptive reuse.
- o Conserve existing moderate-density housing resources.
- o Create and maintain an attractive, interesting pedestrian environment.
- o Encourage transit ridership by area residents, workers and shoppers.
- o Create and maintain safe and attractive residential environments.

Proposed Controls

- o Establish a Van Ness Avenue Mixed-Use District which incorporates variable density and land use controls.
- o Designation of Subarea 3 (from Redwood Street to Broadway) as a Residential-Commercial Combined, High-Density District. Subareas 1, 2 and 5 would remain as they presently exist with the exception that retail activity would be required along the groung floor Van Ness frontage, and Subarea 4 would be reclassified from a C-2 to an RC use district with a 1:400 medium residential density (RC-3 equivalent).
- o Maintain existing height limitations, with the exception of Subarea 1 and portions of Subarea 2 which would have lower height limits.
- o Revise bulk limitations.
- o Establish vertical land use controls for ground and upper level uses of buildings.
- o Amend residential density controls to allow higher density development.
- o Relate the amount of commercial development allowed to the amount of residential space provided within Subarea 3. One square foot of commercial space would be allowed for every three square feet of residential space provided. The existing Floor Area Ratio (FAR) control for commercial density would be replaced with this 3:1 ratio of residential to commercial development. Within Subareas 1 through 3, ground floor retail space would be required and this commercial space would be included as part of the site's allowable commercial development. Housing would not be required within Subareas 1 or 2.
- o Provide relaxation of vertical land use controls, parking requirements and on-site housing requirements, with conditional use authorization, when necessary for preservation and adaptive reuse of identified significant buildings fronting on Van Ness Avenue.

- o Require buildings to be built to the property line along Van Ness Avenue with a 40 to 60 foot building wall along Van Ness and an average 30-foot setback above this 40-60 foot height.

- o Require buildings with frontage along Pine, Sacramento, Clay and Washington Streets to provide a 30 foot setback at the 40 to 60 foot building wall along the east-west street frontage in addition to the required 30 foot setback along the Van Ness frontage, in order to preserve significant view corridors. Because California is a wide street, a 15 foot setback along the California Street frontage at the 40 to 60 foot height would be adequate to preserve significant views.

- o Require new development and major renovation of existing buildings to contribute incrementally to street and sidewalk treatments such as plantings, sidewalk furniture, paving and lighting improvements.

II. POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Potentially significant environmental impacts associated with project implementation include the following issues which will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Report prepared for the proposed Van Ness Avenue Plan and associated Master Plan and City Planning Code amendments.

- o Effects on transportation systems and facilities, particularly transit service and local roadway capacity.

- o Land use and population.

- o Effects on cultural and/or historic resources.

- o Effects on air quality, climate and noise environments.

- o Effects on energy and natural resources.

Potential environmental issues associated with the project that have been determined in this Initial Study to be insignificant, and, therefore not to be addressed in subsequent environmental documentation for the project, include: Relationship of the project to the policies and objectives in the City's Comprehensive Plan; visual quality and urban design; utilities and public services; biology; land, water, and hazards.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION CHECKLIST (INITIAL STUDY), THE VAN NESS AVENUE PLAN, 82.392E

A. COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING ZONING AND PLANS.
Could the project:

	yes	no	discussed
1. Require a variance, special authorization, or change in the City Planning Code or zoning map?	X		X
*2. Conflict with the Comprehensive Plan of the City and County of San Francisco?	X		X
*3. Conflict with any other adopted environmental plans and goals of the city or region?		X	

The proposed Van Ness Avenue Plan policies and objectives are consistent with the policies and objectives presented in all elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan (Master Plan), with the exception of one section of the Civic Center Plan, an element of the Comprehensive Plan (1974), which recommends administrative use for the block north of City Hall fronting on McAllister Street between Van Ness and Polk Street. The Van Ness Avenue Plan differs from the Civic Center Plan in that it recommends retention of an existing apartment building in residential use at the northeast corner of Van Ness and McAllister. The Department proposes to amend the Civic Center Plan to recommend residential use for that property. The Van Ness Avenue Plan is proposed to be adopted by the City Planning Commission as an element of the Comprehensive Plan. The land use and urban design controls set forth in the proposed Van Ness Avenue Mixed-Use District would be adopted as text and map amendments to the City Planning Code. The plan would not conflict with any other adopted environmental plan or goals of the city or region.

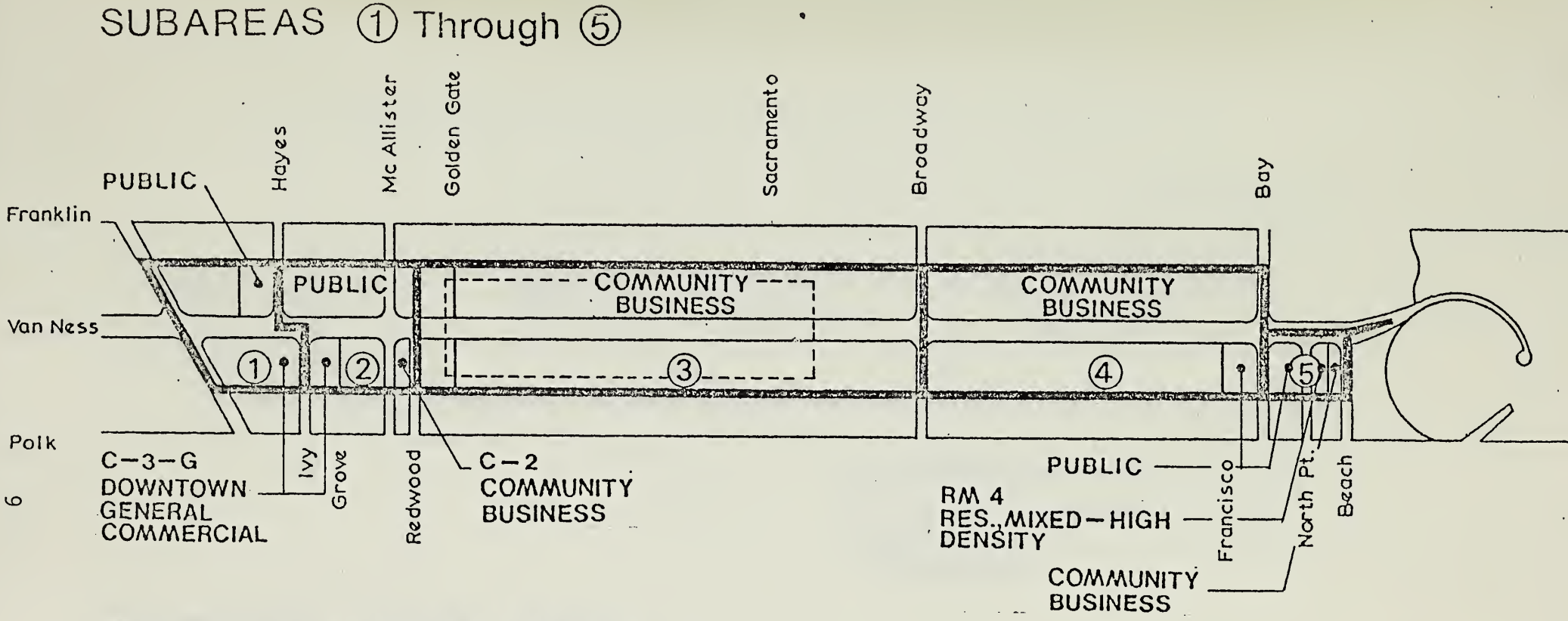
*Derived from State EIR Guidelines, Appendix G, normally significant effect.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS. Could the project:	Yes	No	Disc.
1. Land Use.			
a. Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community?	___	X	X
b. Have any substantial impact upon the existing character of the vicinity?	X	___	X

The proposed project would not change the types of land uses found within the study area. Under the proposed plan, land use patterns would remain the same although the intensity of uses (density) would change within Subareas 1 through 3 from the existing moderate to medium density commercial and residential uses in low-rise buildings to high-density upper level residential uses over moderate to low density lower level commercial uses in midrise buildings (See Figures 3 and 4). The spatial patterns of existing communities would not change. The specific controls for each of the five subareas would be expected to preserve and conserve physical/spatial arrangements of these communities.

Table 1 compares the existing level of development to the existing allowable level of development (that which would be allowed at full build-out under existing zoning) and the proposed Plan's maximum level of development. It should be noted that the Van Ness Avenue area's existing level of development is far less than is allowed under present height, bulk and density controls, and that while the proposed zoning amendments are intended to induce new development, it is not anticipated that every parcel will be developed to its maximum allowable building envelope. Therefore, the full build out or maximum development scenario presented in this environmental assessment should be considered a "worst case" level of development; actual development and associated impacts would be expected to fall somewhere between the existing setting and the worst case or maximum development scenario associated with the Plan. In all cases the intensity of commercial activity would be greater than presently exists and less than is allowed under present zoning controls. Under the proposed Plan, residential densities would be greater than presently exist and is expected to be greater than what would be expected to be developed under present zoning because of the market trend to develop commercial space rather than residential space where solely commercial development is allowed.

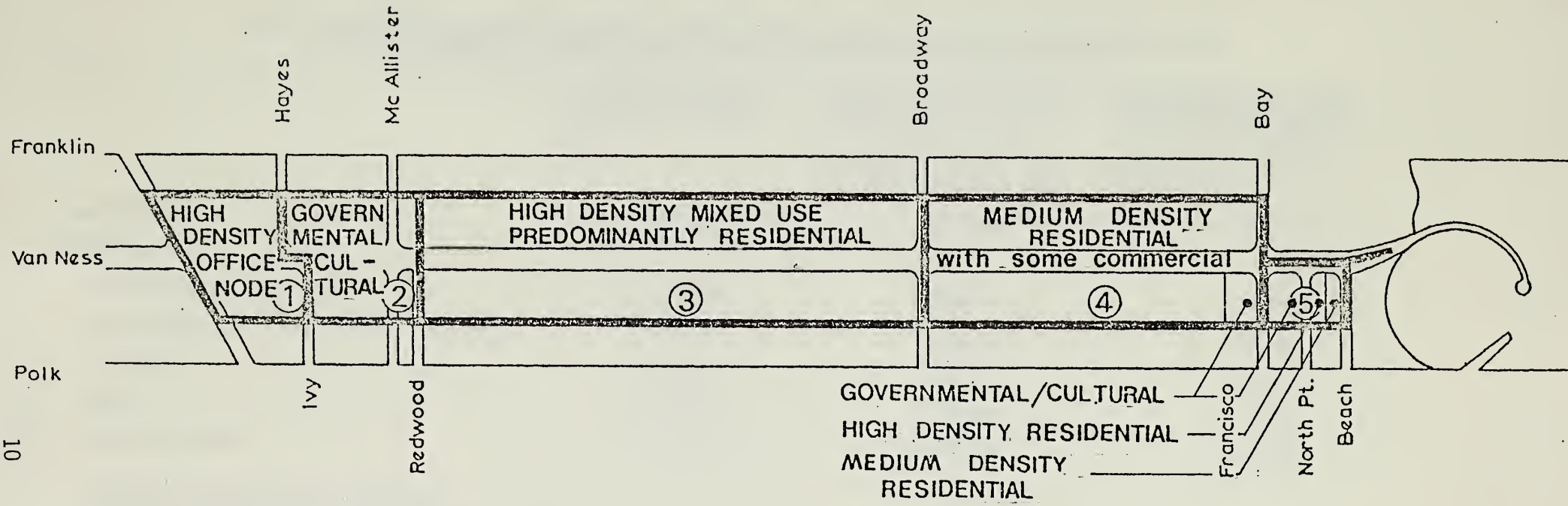
Land use issues associated with the proposed plan will be discussed in detail in the subsequent EIR.



Existing Use Districts

AUTOMOTIVE SPECIAL USE DISTRICT

FIGURE 3



Proposed Land Uses

BY SUBAREA

FIGURE 4

Table 1: COMPARISON OF ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL UNDER EXISTING CONDITIONS, MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE UNDER EXISTING ZONING, AND MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE UNDER THE PROPOSED VAN NESS AVENUE PLAN

	Existing Conditions (10:1 FAR, 1:200 density, 1:4 res. pkg; 1:500 comm. pkg.)	Maximum Development under Existing Zoning -- assuming full commercial buildout as office space (10:1 FAR, 1:200 density, 1:4 res. pkg., res. pkg.,1:500 comm. pkg.)	Maximum Development under the proposed Van Ness Avenue Plan (3:1 res. to comm. dev.,variable density, avg. 800 sq.ft. unit size, 1:4 1:500 comm. pkg.)
Land area	3,577,547	3,577,547	3,577,547
Building area			
office space in square feet	2,238,422	19,225,811	5,300,688
retail (ground floor uses and existing hotels)	4,535,748	1,023,295	2,752,224
residential	2,940,579	1,333,507	7,458,457
public	2,119,188	2,119,188	2,119,188
commercial parking	715,515	12,149,463	3,342,089
average areawide commercial density excluding required parking (Floor Area Ratio - FAR)*	2.7:1	7.6:1	2.2:1
No. dwelling units	2,428	553	7,790
average areawide residential density**	1:200	1:230	1:307

* Commercial building area, excluding parking, divided by available commercial land area.

** Residential land area divided by number of units.

2. Visual Quality

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Have a substantial, demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?	___	X	X
b. Substantially degrade or obstruct any scenic view or vista now observed from public areas?	___	X	X
c. Generate obtrusive light or glare substantially impacting other properties?	___	X	X

The project incorporates a number of urban design policies and controls which are expected to guide new development in such a way as to make buildings more compatible with existing outstanding buildings as well as the scale of existing structures in the area and surrounding neighborhoods; to transform the avenue into an attractive and pleasant residential environment; to fulfill the objectives and policies presented in the Urban Design Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan; and to preserve and enhance existing scenic views seen from public spaces in the area, such as the Civic Center Historic District, the Pine, California, Sacramento, Clay and Washington Streets view corridors, and views of the Bay shoreline and headlands beyond seen from the foot of Van Ness Avenue. (Please refer to Table 2 for a list of proposed Urban Design policies.)

The Plan proposes to lower height limits in Subarea 1 and portions of Subareas 2 and for the most part does not change existing height limits north of Turk Street. The Plan proposes policies which are intended to preserve and enhance existing views of the bay and hilltops from the site and surrounding neighborhoods. Under existing or proposed zoning, individual buildings may or may not obstruct views from adjacent buildings or generate light or glare affecting other properties; these effects would be evaluated on a project-specific basis as new building permit applications are reviewed by the Department. A proposed 20 foot side setback for building towers would preserve light and air for residents of abutting buildings.

Table 2: Proposed Areawide Urban Design Objectives and Policies

For further discussion of these policies please refer to the Van Ness Avenue Plan pp. 22-31 which is incorporated herein by reference.

URBAN DESIGN

Visual Form

Areawide Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1: To enhance the Natural Land Forms along the Van Ness Corridor with new development.

Policy 1: Maintain height controls which, for the most part, allow sufficient density to encourage and facilitate new development while emphasizing the natural land forms of the area.

OBJECTIVE 2: To Maintain and Enhance the Street's Visual Form and Resources.

Policy 1: Encourage new development closer to the height limit.

Policy 2: Strengthen the area's existing scale as well as emphasize the predominant height of significant buildings by maintaining in the high density mixed use development area (Subarea 3), a generally uniform street wall with a deep setback above this street wall.

Policy 3: Conform building shapes to bulk controls. In higher height districts require conformity to controls which are designed to encourage sculpturing and articulation of building towers, particularly at the upper levels.

(For discussion of proposed bulk controls and measurement, building forms, height allowances and setbacks, please see Van Ness Avenue Plan pp. 25-29 which is incorporated herein by reference.)

Policy 4: Incorporate exterior building design and treatments in new development which would complement and enhance the street's existing unique Renaissance/Beaux Arts architectural identity.

Policy 5: For large parcel developments with greater than half a block frontages, interrupt facade patterns with a change in architectural treatments, such as changes in fenestration and materials, at least at the half-block interval.

Policy 6: Incorporate design features (such as upper level canopies) on new developments and renovations when necessary to serve as a wind barrier.

PROPOSED
HEIGHT & BULK DISTRICTS

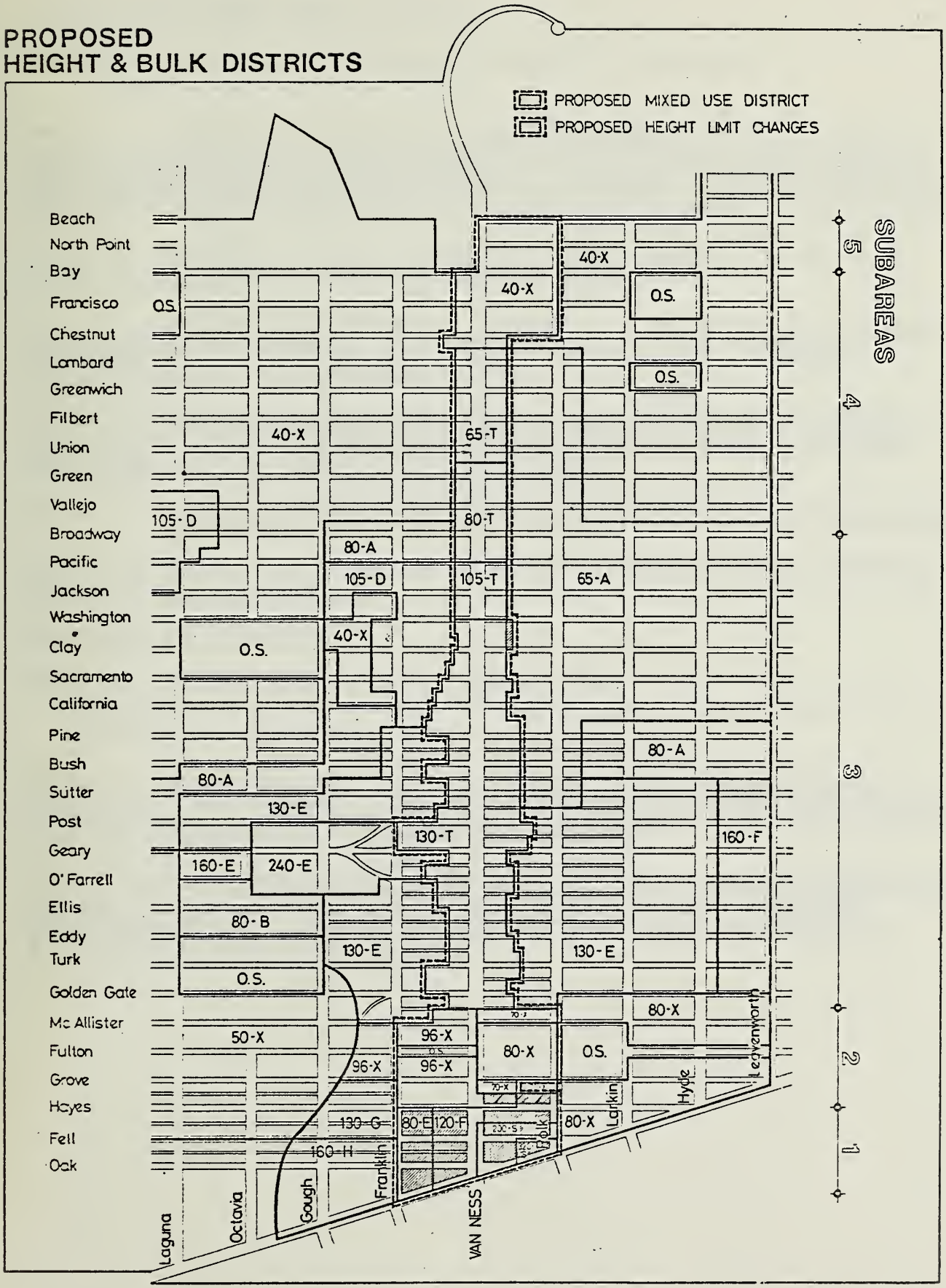


FIGURE 5

Streetscape/Building Facade Treatment

OBJECTIVE: To Create and Maintain an Attractive, Interesting Streetscape with a Human Scale.

Policy 1: Encourage vertical and horizontal articulation of the facade on bases of buildings and incorporate detail at ground level through change of material, color, texture and architectural projections. Provide windows with clear glass to enable the pedestrian to view interior commercial activities.

Policy 2: Provide in interior spaces such pedestrian amenities as plazas, places to sit, planting areas, fountains or cafes.

Policy 3: Incorporate architectural treatments in new buildings which would be sympathetic to the scale, form and proportions of older buildings, particularly those of outstanding quality.

Policy 4: Frame auto-oriented uses (such as gas stations) with a platform that relates harmoniously with nearby facade patterns and provide adequate ventilation and fire prevention design features.

Policy 5: Discourage bridges over minor streets or other public right-of-ways.

Policy 6: Design signs on new and renovated buildings to create a positive human scale along the street.

Open Space and Greenspace

OBJECTIVE: To develop a Greenspace System within the Sidewalk and Street Median Space which would Create a Distinctive Identity for the Avenue.

Policy 1: Incorporate both private and common open space and greenspace elements into new residential development and renovation of existing buildings to create a more attractive residential environment.

Policy 2: Assure that new development and major renovation contributes to the creation of an attractive street and sidewalk space by incor- porating landscape vegetation, sidewalk pavement treatment, street lighting, and furniture in adjacent public spaces.

Subarea Urban Design Objectives and Policies

Subarea 2: Civic Center (Hayes to Redwood Streets)

Policy 1: Strengthen the special space along Van Ness Avenue between Grove and McAllister Streets formed by the setback of City Hall and the Opera House/War Memorial buildings.

Policy 2: Strengthen the special ceremonial character of the Civic Center area.

Subarea 3: (Redwood to Broadway)

Policy 1: Assure that new development and major renovation at the Van Ness/California Street intersection are designed to minimize adverse wind conditions and maximize sun exposure at pedestrian level, particularly in the vicinity of the cable car terminus.

Policy 2: Preserve significant view corridors along east-west thoroughfares.

3. Population

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Induce substantial growth or concentration of population?	X		X
*b. Displace a large number of people (involving either housing or employment)	X		X
c. Create a substantial demand for additional housing in San Francisco, or substantially reduce the housing supply?		X	X

The area's resident population would be expected to increase from about 5,300 persons to about 17,500 persons, assuming retention of about 2,160 existing units and development of 5,825 new units (based on an average 800 gsf living unit and an average 2.19 persons per unit). Direct permanent employment would increase from about 23,000 to up to 32,300 workers.

Plan adoption and implementation is expected to stimulate new investment in the Van Ness Avenue area, particularly in the area of housing. Based on present and historical investment patterns for the area, it can be expected that new investments will occur slowly and incrementally over a 5 to 10 year period. The Plan would be expected to have a growth-inducing effect within the project area and may stimulate investment in abutting low-density properties where present zoning permits such development. Neighboring Pacific Heights and/or Polk Gulch/Tenderloin areas may experience similar yet slower growth-inducing effects although this is expected to be more directly related to the city's overall demand and market pressure for new housing development. The Plan may attract residential development which may otherwise have located elsewhere in the city or region. The Plan may attract retail and minimal secondary office space investments which may otherwise have been directed in the Downtown or South of Market areas or neighborhood commercial districts throughout the city.

The Plan is intended to satisfy a portion of the city's existing demand for housing as well as a portion of the anticipated demand generated by people attracted to the city by new office employment associated with recently approved office development in the Central Business District (CBD). Development under the policies and controls proposed by the Plan could result in the displacement of approximately 268 existing living units in 16 buildings which are located on parcels which have a low ratio of improvements to land value and are thereby considered "soft sites" and vulnerable to development, while 2,160 units would be conserved and 5,825 new units could be constructed for a net areawide housing supply of 7,985, representing a 328% increase over existing housing resources. The effects of resident population and employment growth will be addressed in the EIR.

4. Transportation/Circulation.

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to existing traffic load and capacity of the street system?	X	___	X
b. Interfere with existing transportation systems, causing substantial alterations to circulation patterns or major traffic hazards?	___	X	X
c. Cause a substantial increase in transit demand which cannot be accommodated by existing or proposed transit capacity?	X	___	X
d. Cause a substantial increase in parking demand which cannot be accommodated by existing parking facilities?	X	___	X

Use of transportation systems and resources would increase with new development. The effects of this increased demand on existing transportation systems will be addressed in the EIR.

5. Noise.

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Increase substantially the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas?	X		X
b. Violate Title 25 Noise Insulation Standards, if applicable?		X	X
c. Be substantially impacted by existing noise levels?		X	X

Increased traffic associated with new development would increase the ambient noise level within the Van Ness Avenue area. The present ambient noise level along Van Ness Avenue is approximately 75 CNEL*, primarily due to noise generated by buses, trucks and motorcycles.(1)

A 75 CNEL is roughly equivalent to a $75L_{dn}$** which is considered a "loud" noise environment for residential uses by the Environmental Protection Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The element requires new housing development and new office development within this noise environment to incorporate adequate noise insulation features in project design. New housing development would be subject to Title 25 noise insulation standards and interior noise due to exterior sources must not exceed a 45 CNEL. In addition to Title 25 standards, the Plan recommends several design features which would reduce the physical and psychological effects of exterior noise along Van Ness; these include a 1 to 5 level building podium with commercial space, a 30-foot setback above the commercial podium, street trees within the sidewalk and street median strip trees which canopy over the street, tall planting and/or canopies within the setback open space area over the podium, and solaria balconies on residential windows facing Van Ness Avenue. Although openable windows are recommended for energy conservation, these windows can be double-paned to achieve Title 25 standards when closed. The effects of increased traffic associated with new development on the ambient noise environment will be addressed in the EIR.

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(1) Charles M. Solter Associates, Inc., May 13, 1981 letter to John Pihl, Bull, Field, Volkmann, Stockwell.

* CNEL: Community Noise Equivalent Level; similar to L_{dn} except that sound level measurements taken between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. are weighted 5 dBA higher than daytime sounds in addition to the 10dBA 10 P.M. to 7 a.m. weighting.

** L_{dn}: An averaged sound level measurement, based on human reaction to cumulative noise exposure over a 24-hour period, which takes into account the greater annoyance of nighttime noises. Noise between 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. is weighted 10 dBA higher than daytime noise.

6. Air Quality/Climate

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Violate any ambient air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	X		X
*b. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?		X	X
c. Permeate its vicinity with objectionable odors?		X	X
d. Alter wind, moisture, or temperature (including sun shading effects) so as to substantially affect public areas, or change the climate either in the community or region?		X	X

New development would be expected to increase vehicular traffic in the area and would result in an undetermined amount of degradation of the local air quality. The effects of new development on local and regional air quality goals and standards will be discussed in the EIR

The Van Ness area climate is generally warm and temperate, lying within one of the city's "sun belt" areas, and experiences gentle to moderate southwesterly winds in the afternoons.

Development of highrise buildings in Subarea 1 and midrise buildings in Subarea 3 may create adverse wind effects on surrounding properties.

The Plan would require each development project to analyze and mitigate any potential adverse wind effects of the project on nearby and down wind pedestrian spaces and upper level open spaces. The Plan would not allow land uses which are known to produce objectionable odors, such as food processing, sewage treatment plants, or other such uses.

7. Utilities and Public Services

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Breach published national, state or local standards relating to solid waste or litter control?	___	X	X
*b. Extend a sewer trunk line with capacity to serve new development?	___	X	X
c. Substantially increase demand for schools, recreation, or other public facilities?	___	X	X
d. Require major expansion of power, water, or communications facilities?	___	X	X

Police and Fire Protection

The project area is served by the San Francisco Police Department's Northern Station located at 841 Ellis Street between Van Ness and Polk Street. The Department's Northern Station services the neighborhoods of Russian Hill, Polk Gulch, Tenderloin, Civic Center, Western Addition, Duboce Triangle and portions of lower Pacific Heights. The area served by the Northern Station ranks high in reported crime incidence compared with other areas of the city. Within the service area, more crimes were reported east at Van Ness and South of Washington Street between Van Ness and Leavenworth. The Van Ness Avenue area is served by a 24-hour auto patrol with an emergency response time of three to five minutes./1/

The Plan would increase population and personal property in the area and would therefore increase the potential for crime. Plan recommendations for internal security and safety features within individual projects would be expected to reduce the potential incidence of crime. (See Table 3, page 27.) San Francisco Police Department's existing personnel and equipment at the Northern Station could adequately serve the plan's projected development./1/

There are eight San Francisco Fire Department stations serving the Van Ness Avenue area. Four of the stations carry ladders, in addition to hoses, which can service buildings of up to nine stories. For taller buildings, charter helicopter companies are available to assist the Fire Department's firefighters and equipment. Response time within the study area is less than three minutes. Water pressure is adequate for all hydrants within the area./2/

Increased day and nightime population would induce a corresponding increase in use of public services and utilities. The project would increase the building area and number of persons using these spaces and thus may increase the number of fire incidents in the area. New buildings would incorporate more extensive fire protection measures than most older buildings in the area and would comply with more stringent current fire protection codes. Existing water distribution systems and water pressure for fire-fighting various locations along Van Ness are adequate to serve the maximum allowable development under the proposed Plan. There are eight fire stations which serve the project area.

Emergency response time to any location along Van Ness Avenue would remain within 3 minutes. Existing personnel and equipment would adequately serve the plan's proposed development, except in the case of a major citywide disaster or in the case of a number of simultaneous highrise fires.2/ However, since new highrise buildings must comply with the life safety provisions of the San Francisco Building Code, most fires in these buildings can be expected to yield to minimum response by the Fire Department.

Schools

In addition to a number of private schools, there are seven elementary, three middle and two public high schools serving school-age children living within the study area. As individual schools reach capacity, students are transferred to other, less utilized schools within the district. Elementary school children are provided school bus service, while middle and high school students generally take the Muni./3/

Under the proposed Plan, up to 5,825 new housing units could be added to the area's existing housing stock representing an estimated increase in resident population of about 12,760 persons. Because of high land and construction costs, the new units will probably be expensive, and it is expected that few large size households with more than two children would be able to afford them. It is anticipated that most of the new units will be occupied by two working adults. Consequently, the units will probably be designed to accommodate the smaller household size (1 to 2 bedrooms). New development can be expected to attract a small, yet undetermined number of households with school-aged children. These children could be served by the San Francisco Unified School District without requiring additional personnel or equipment.3/

Open Space

There are 10 public parks and/or recreational facilities located within two to four blocks of Van Ness Avenue; these include:

- George R. Moscone Rec. Center at Bay/Chestnut/Webster/Laguna
- Lafayette Park at Gough/Laguna/Washington/Sacramento
- Allyne Park at Gough/Green
- Jefferson Square/Hayward Playground at Eddy/Golden Gate/Gough/Laguna
- Russian Hill Park at Bay/Larkin/Hyde
- Alice Marble Tennis Courts/George Sterling Glade at Hyde/Larkin/Lombard/Greenwich
- Helen Wiilis Playground at Broadway/Larkin
- Civic Center Plaza at Polk/Larkin/McAllister/Grove
- Fort Mason at Bay/Van Ness
- Aquatic Park at Hyde Street Pier

Of the 10 facilities, the George Moscone Center has the greatest number of recreational facilities and is the most heavily used, followed by the Alice Marble and Helen Willis Tennis Courts. Hayward Playground offers active recreational facilities, including two night lit baseball diamonds, and is well used. The Lafayette, Allyne, Sterling, Russian Hill Parks and Jefferson Square are oriented towards "passive" recreation and are not as heavily used. The Civic Center, Fort Mason, Aquatic Park/Hyde Street Pier facilities are well-utilized yet have capacity to accommodate more users./4/

Increased employee and resident population would generate a demand for additional recreational and open space facilities, such as sunlit plazas or courtyards, parks with sitting areas and/or clubs with indoor recreation facilities. The Plan requires the provision of open space resources for individual development projects. Areawide public park resources would be adequate to serve the predominantly adult resident population associated with new housing development.4/

The Plan would result in a net increase in energy consumption. The Plan recommends that individual projects incorporate energy conservation designs, construction materials and operating procedures which would exceed State Title 24 energy conservation standards. The energy effects associated with new development would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis during the environmental review and/or permit review process for individual projects.

Water and Sewer Service

Water service is provided by the San Francisco Water Department. The water distribution system is well developed within the project area with 8 to 16 inch mains serving most of the area. The distribution system is considered by the Water Department to be sufficient for domestic use and has been sized to accommodate a much higher level of development. Sewer service is provided by the City's Department of Public Works./5/

The Plan would allow up to about 4.5 million gsf of new retail or office space, and about 5,825 new dwelling units. This would be expected to result in a net increase in water use of about 2 million gallons per day and a cumulative demand of about 3.7 million gallons per day. The existing water supply, distribution system and water pressure has been determined to be adequate to serve this level of new development within the project area.5/

The sewer lines on Van Ness Avenue are a combination of century old sewers and newer ones with the older ones not necessarily representing more of a maintenance problem than the new ones. In dry weather, sewage capacity is always sufficient. In wet weather, Van Ness has no special sewage problems but does contribute to a citywide overflow problem which is presently being corrected by the City's Clean Water Program./6/

The amount of wastewater generated by new development would be approximately the same as the amount of water used, as described above. Sewer capacity serving the study area would be adequate to serve the plan's anticipated new development.6/ New development would generate a net increase of approximately 44 tons of solid waste per day representing approximately 16,000 tons per year for a cumulative total (new and remaining existing development) of 42,267 tons per year. Adequate collection services

could be provided and would probably occur daily as at present.7/ Disposal effects would depend on the eventual selection of a disposal method and/or site for the city's solid wastes.

FOOTNOTES

Utilities and Public Services

1/ Sergeant Paul Liebert, Planning and Research Division, San Francisco Police Department, telephone communication, October 20, 1982.

2/ Chief Edward Phipps, San Francisco Fire Department, telephone communication, October 20, 1982.

3/ Mr. Walker, Enrollment Officer, San Francisco Unified School District, telephone communication, November 1, 1982.

4/ Jim Rogers, Assistant Superintendent of Parks, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, telephone communication, September 20, 1982.

5/ Cyrus Wentworth, Estimator, San Francisco Water Department, telephone communication, October 20, 1982.

6/ Mervin Francies, engineer, San Francisco Clean Water Program, telephone communication, September 20, 1982.

7/ Fiore Garbarino, Office Manager, Golden Gate Disposal Company, telephone communication, November 1, 1982.

8. Biology.

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Substantially affect a rare or endangered species of animal or plant or the habitat of the species?	___	X	X
*b. Substantially diminish habitat for fish, wildlife or plants, or interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species?	___	X	X

The project area is covered with impervious surfaces or landscape vegetation. There are no known endangered plants or animals within the project area. The Project would not affect any plant or animal life or habitat.

9. Geology/Topography

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Expose people or structures to major geologic hazards?	___	X	X
b. Change substantially the topography or any unique geologic or physical features of the site?	___	X	___

Van Ness Avenue lies at the bottom of the slopes between Nob Hill and Cathedral Hill/LaFayette Park Hill. The Avenue extends approximately 12,000 feet in a north-south orientation with the Market Street edge at about 40 feet elevation rising to about 190 feet at Washington Street and then gently decreasing to sea level at the Bay shoreline.

The project area is susceptible to ground shaking ranging from strong to very strong in magnitude during seismic activity with a small area at the Van Ness/Broadway intersection susceptible to violent ground shaking (John A. Blume Associates, 1974).

Damage to new housing within the area due to seismic activity would be less than would occur to existing, older buildings due to the seismic safety requirements of the San Francisco Building Code. Most damage resulting from seismic activity would be associated with older, existing buildings built prior to the adoption of seismic safety codes (1948).

10. Water

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Substantially degrade water quality, or contaminate a public water supply?	___	X	___
*b. Substantially degrade or deplete ground water resources, or interfere substantially with ground water recharge?	___	X	___
*c. Cause substantial flooding, erosion or siltation?	___	X	___

As the area is already urbanized, existing drainage systems and storm drains would serve new development. Specific impacts to local mains serving individual projects would be assessed on a case-by-case basis under separate project-specific environmental review. Please refer to Item 7 of this checklist for a discussion of water service impacts.

11. Energy/Natural Resources

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Encourage activities which result in the use of large amounts of fuel, water, or energy, or use these in a wasteful manner?	___	X	X
b. Have a substantial effect on the potential use, extraction, or depletion of a natural resource?	___	X	___

The Plan encourages energy conservation related to transportation impacts by proposing high-density housing near employment centers and along transit corridors. See Item 7 of this checklist of a discussion of water service impacts.

The energy impacts associated with new residential and commercial development will be discussed in the EIR.

12. Hazards.

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Create a potential public health hazard, or involve the use, production or disposal of materials which pose a hazard to people or animal or plant populations in the area affected?	___	X	___
b. Interfere with emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans?	___	X	X
c. Create a potentially substantial fire hazard?	___	X	___

Increased local population may create additional congestion in emergency evacuation. The City's Emergency Service Program does not anticipate any

problems in serving growth in residential or employee population associated with the Plan./1/

/1/ Tom Jenkins, San Francisco Emergency Service Program, Telephone Communication, November 8, 1982.

13. Cultural.

	Yes	No	Disc.
*a. Disrupt or adversely affect a prehistoric or historic archaeological site or a property of historic or cultural significance to a community or ethnic or social group; or a paleontological site except as a part of a scientific study?	X		X
*b. Conflict with established recreational, educational, religious or scientific uses of the area?		X	X
c. Conflict with preservation of any buildings of city landmark quality?		X	X

The Plan proposes a number of policies and incentives for preservation of identified significant buildings. Existing recreational, educational, religious or scientific uses would be allowed to remain. The Plan proposes a number of policies intended to preserve and enhance the special cultural and physical/spatial resources of the five distinct subareas within the broader project area. The effects of new development on historic, architectural and culturally significant buildings will be discussed in the EIR.

C. OTHER

	Yes	No	Disc.
Require approval of permits from City departments other than DCP or BBI, or from regional, state or federal agencies?	X		X

The Plan's implementing text and map amendments to the City Planning Code would need to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

D. MITIGATION MEASURES:	Yes	No	N/A	Disc.
1. If any significant effects have been identified, are there ways to mitigate them?	X			X
2. Are all mitigation measures identified above included in the project?	X			X

A number of plan policies have been designed and included in the plan to serve as mitigation measures for potential environmental impacts associated with new development along Van Ness Avenue; these are summarized in Table 4. Other mitigation measures will be identified in the EIR, as appropriate.

Table 3: Summary of Plan Policies Designed to Serve As Mitigation Measures for Anticipated Impacts Associated with New Development.

The following goals, as well as relevant environmental standards presented in the City's Comprehensive Plan, served as measuring tools for evaluating the impacts and appropriateness of alternative land use and urban design concepts considered during the planning analysis which preceded the Plan.

The plan is based on four basic goals.

- o To encourage high density residential development within mixed use (residential-commercial) projects along Van Ness Avenue.
- o To preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment along Van Ness Avenue.
- o To preserve architecturally and historically significant buildings.
- o To encourage new development to contribute positively to the visual and urban design quality of the street.

A concurrent environmental assessment of each conceptual alternative assisted in the selection of the best alternative policy guideline and land use regulation which form the basis of the plan. The following plan approaches, which are manifest as plan policies, are related to environmental impacts identified in this Initial Study as insignificant based in part on the fact that these policies would mitigate otherwise potentially significant impacts. Plan policies related to potentially significant effects of the project will be discussed in the EIR.

Potential impact: Development of existing small parcels with small, box-like structures which, because of their size, would not incorporate attractive and/or efficient design features.

Proposed mitigation: Assembly of small parcels into larger parcels.

Relevant plan policy:

Policy 4: Encourage large lot development.

Potential impact: Development of parcels out of scale with the existing local and areawide land forms and citywide urban design goals.

Proposed mitigation: Maintain existing height limits which mimic the street's natural land forms and encourage development to this maximum limit.

Relevant Plan policies:

URBAN DESIGN

Visual Form

Areawide Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1: To Enhance the Natural Land Forms along the Van Ness Corridor with New Development.

Building Form

OBJECTIVE 2: To Maintain and Enhance the Street's Visual Form and Resources.

Potential impact: Development out of scale with the pedestrian environment.

Proposed mitigation: Design new buildings to provide articulated building bases and active ground floor uses to create a positive human scale at street level.

Relevant plan policies:

Visual Form, Objective 2, Policy 2:

Policy 2: Strengthen the area's existing scale as well as emphasize the predominant height of significant buildings by maintaining in the high density mixed use development area (Subarea 3), a generally uniform street wall with a deep setback above this street wall.

Visual Form, Objective 2, Policy 3:

Policy 3: Conform building shapes to bulk controls. In higher height districts require conformity to controls which are designed to encourage sculpturing and articulation of building towers, particularly at the upper levels.

Streetscape/Building Facade Treatment

OBJECTIVE: To Create and Maintain an Attractive, Interesting Streetscape with a Human Scale.

Open Space and Greenspace

OBJECTIVE: To Develop a Greenspace System within the Sidewalk and Street Median Space which would Create a Distinctive Identity for the Avenue.

Potential impact: Generation of adverse wind conditions at pedestrian level and within open space areas.

Proposed mitigation: Incorporation of design features on all new developments which would provide wind protection and sun exposure to private and public open space areas.

Relevant plan policies:

RESIDENTIAL LIVABILITY

OBJECTIVE: To provide Safe and Attractive Environments within each Mixed Use Development.

Sun, Shade and Wind Protection

Policy 2: Design housing projects to maximize sun orientation and natural light exposure to individual units. Incorporate design features which would provide wind protection and sun exposure to private and common open space areas.

E. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

		Yes	No	Disc.
*1.	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number of restrict the range of rare or endangered plant or animal, or, eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	___	X	___
*2.	Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	___	X	___
*3.	Does the project have possible environmental effects which are individually limited, but cumulatively considable? (Analyze in the light of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects)	X	___	X
*4.	Would the project cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	___	X	___
*5.	Is there a serious public controversy concerning the possible environmental effect of the project?	___	X	___

The project may include development which may contribute incrementally to cumulative adverse impacts on the City's transportation systems energy resources, historic/cultural resources and generalized perceived neighborhood scale and quality.

F. ON THE BASIS OF THIS INITIAL STUDY:

_____ I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared by the Department of City Planning.

_____ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures, numbers _____, in the discussion have been included as part of the proposed project. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

__X__ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

Robert W. Passmore
Assistant Director of Planning
--Implementation
(Zoning Administrator)

for

Dean L. Macris
Director of Planning

Date: June 9, 1983